

Chapter 3

Emergency Response Phase Task Force Freedom

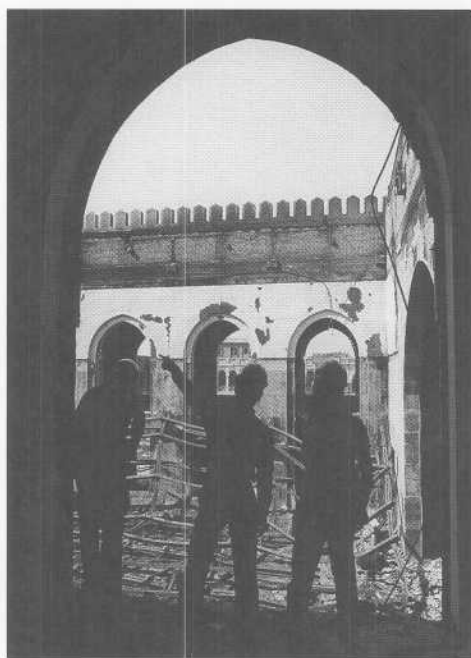
Task Force Freedom's primary mission was to provide the legitimate government of Kuwait with military and civilian assistance and to plan and implement a program to restore as quickly as possible the functions and services of that government after the Iraqi forces withdrew. The *New York Times* highlighted the varied nature of this assistance, reporting: "It is the American Army that has turned the electricity back on here, gotten the water running, cleared the highways of shrapnel and wrecked cars, hooked up those telephones that worked, dredged the main port of Shuaiba and unloaded the ships, brought the drinking water and food, fixed the police cars, and fed the animals in the zoo."¹ Task Force Freedom procured and distributed large quantities of medical supplies, food, and water until the Kuwaitis could mobilize their own resources.

Upon their arrival, Ambassador Gnehm and U.S. military leaders quickly discovered that Kuwait City was in better shape than anticipated. The once gleaming city had been damaged, but not destroyed. Closer inspection revealed that the Iraqis had prepared to fight house-to-house. They had stockpiled huge amounts of weapons and ammunition, placed mines throughout the city and especially along the beaches, erected barriers, and bricked up windows to make firing ports. The major road system consisted of a series of east-west ring roads around the city and north-south radial roads leading to the center. Damage to these roads reflected a pattern of attempting to stop coalition forces from entering the heart of Kuwait City.

In contrast to post-World War II Germany, little structural damage existed. However, hundreds of schools and other public buildings had been looted and vandalized, heaped with debris, and ravaged by fire. Iraqi soldiers had burned encyclopedias to heat their tea. Some of the hardest hit structures included the Seif Palace, the Bayan Palace com-



*Above, Iraqi soldiers
fortified the beaches in
Kuwait with bunkers; right,
KERO damage assessment
team inspects the Seif
Palace, March 1991.*



plex, the National Assembly building, Kuwait International Airport, and the four-lane highway from Dhahran.

Since its construction in 1903, the elegant Seif Palace, sitting on the waterfront from which it takes its name, had been the center of power, where the Crown Prince and many of the ministers had their offices. It was the equivalent of the White House and executive offices in the United States. Iraqi soldiers had burned the building and then fired tank rounds that dropped the floor slabs 3 to 4 inches. The fire exposed traditional construction techniques, revealing that the floors were made from reeds woven together and matted with mud. Initially it was unclear whether the historic building could be repaired.²

Kuwait's residents had been spared severe shortages of food and water. They had managed to store some water in rounded rooftop tanks and hoard enough food to last until the city's food distribution system operated again. They had also stockpiled medical supplies. No serious medical crisis, such as cholera or malaria, existed. Yet Kuwait's residents had no running water, electricity, or functioning sanitation system.³

In the first 48 hours after the liberation of the city, the U.S. Army delivered 18 truckloads of medical supplies to two hospitals and sent out four teams to assess existing medical, food, sanitation, and water supplies. Convoys began delivering food to two designated distribution centers. Soldiers placed seven large generators at hospitals and other sites to provide power. The psychological operations radio transmissions provided public service announcements. The situation looked so promising that one civil affairs officer optimistically reported, "There is no real emergency phase to restoration."⁴

Task Force Freedom Elements

Task Force Freedom consisted of engineer, signal corps, military police, explosive ordnance disposal, logistics support, medical, aviation, and civil affairs elements. Army engineer missions were to help assess the damage, identify the engineer effort required to repair the roads in Kuwait, supply the construction materials needed to provide interim emergency services, coordinate with the Kuwait Task Force and the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office, and perform emergency repairs to vital Kuwaiti facilities.⁵

Shortly past midnight on 1 March, a Chinook helicopter carrying the first two soldiers from the 416th Engineer Command (Forward) lifted off from King Khalid Military City bound for Kuwait City. Landing at Kuwait International Airport, the soldiers found that the terminal building,



Task Force Freedom headquarters in Kuwait

hotel, maintenance facilities, and aprons had been vandalized, though the airfield itself was not badly damaged. Moving through the city, they discovered that the bridges, roadways, and public buildings were, for the most part, intact. Based on the initial assessment of these engineers, General Schardein canceled a planned firefighting detachment and added a reinforced vertical construction platoon with electrical, plumbing, and carpentry capability.

Over the next two days, others from the engineer command drove north from King Khalid Military City and settled into a Ministry of Education building a few miles north of Camp Freedom.⁶ By the end of the first week, the engineer command reached 31 members, most from the 864th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy), the 43d Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy), a team from the 535th Engineer Detachment (Prime Power), and the 259th Engineer Company (Combat Support).

Two vertical platoons from the 864th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy) conducted damage surveys; performed electrical, plumbing, and carpentry missions at various sites; and provided initial emergency plumbing and water service to the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait and several hospitals in the city. A particularly challenging mission involved using



*Checkpoint Charlie in southern Iraq, staffed by C Company,
5th Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 3d Armored Division*

two miles of petroleum distribution pipeline to connect the fuel pump house of one of the desalinization/electrical power plants at Doha to the boilers of another, basically combining elements of two heavily damaged plants to make one operational plant.⁷

A team from the 43d Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy) followed the maneuver units into Kuwait to repair roads damaged or destroyed by retreating Iraqis. One of the battalion's earthmoving platoons repaired the main roads between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, filling bomb craters and clearing burnt-out vehicles, while Company B cleared debris from Kuwait International Airport and other sites.

The 535th Engineer Detachment provided power for the headquarters building and the medical building at Camp Freedom. The team did not bring in its own power generation equipment, but it repaired dozens of existing generators at hospitals, fire stations, police stations, and bakeries. The main problem was a shortage of batteries because Iraqi soldiers had stolen the batteries from most cars and generators in the city. Engineers provided electrical generators to illuminate the airport runways and installed 16 generators to provide security lighting in tense areas of the city.⁸ Although the Army engineers had the equipment,

training, and expertise to provide even greater assistance, Army leaders limited their role, possibly to redeploy soldiers who had supported Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM quickly and to limit the presence of American soldiers in Kuwait.

Another task force element, the 44th Signal Battalion of the 11th Signal Brigade, extended the echelons above corps tactical command and control network for the task force. These soldiers extended this network through UHF and satellite transmission systems, tactical voice and record switching, and telephone installation. Within days, they installed more than a hundred telephones and successfully connected Camp Freedom to the theaterwide communications network.⁹

The task force also included military police and explosive ordnance disposal specialists. In the first week of March, the 720th Military Police Battalion and its subordinate units escorted convoys carrying food and supplies through the city and provided security for visiting dignitaries. They patrolled the main roads and joint checkpoints and secured the airfield.¹⁰

The Iraqis had rigged various facilities for demolition. The 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group cleared ammunition and mines from city buildings, giving residents a renewed sense of security. It cleared the ports and billeting areas used by the U.S. military and helped Army engineers demolish Iraqi bunkers. In the first 10 days, the unit destroyed 3,500 pounds of captured ammunition. It operated an explosive ordnance disposal center incorporating resources from the U.S. Air Force, Army, and Navy, plus the French and British armies. The ordnance disposal experts coordinated with the 352d Civil Affairs Command and contractors who cleared power line rights of way. However, clearing the extensive minefields in the countryside was beyond the unit's capabilities.¹¹

A "jump cell" from the 22d Support Command deployed to the Kuwaiti airport on 1 March 1991 as part of Task Force Freedom. The command used forward area support coordination offices, ranging from three people to a company-sized element, as points of contact for all logistics and service support. The command provided logistics support not only to the task force but also to the U.S. and allied embassies. It negotiated and contracted for approximately two hundred civilians to clean Camp Freedom and provide sanitation services; helped local businesses resume operations; and provided temporary shower, dining, and sleeping facilities for convoys and allied troops moving through Kuwait City. The 301st Area Support Group arrived in Kuwait City on 3 March and established its headquarters at the port of Al Shuaiba, several miles southeast of the city.

The logistics support requirements gradually shifted from bringing forward materiel and equipment to distributing and maintaining those items. Supplies and services flowed without interruption, and the command provided food, water, showers, and laundry for 3,000 people. It also provided generators, forklifts, transportation assets, water bladders, and an emergency hospital. Soldiers removed all pork products from the military's prepackaged "meals ready to eat" for distribution to Kuwait's Islamic residents and provided modified versions of the prepackaged meals for young children.¹² Soldiers from the ARCENT Medical Command (Forward) served on damage assessment teams, implemented a livestock feeding program, instituted a program to treat enemy prisoners of war, examined the city's reservoirs, inspected the soldiers' food, and provided them with health care.¹³

Special operations forces with Task Force Freedom served as advisors to the Kuwaiti soldiers who took over police stations and manned roadblocks. They soon expanded their role. With the help of Kuwaiti resistance fighters who had remained in the city during the occupation, the special operations forces cleared booby traps and minefields. Kuwaiti resistance fighters guided special forces teams to key Iraqi headquarters buildings and torture sites where they collected five truckloads of Iraqi documents. Many of these documents indicated possible violations of the Geneva Convention.¹⁴ Another small but important element of Task Force Freedom, the 2d Aviation Brigade, flew hundreds of missions, transporting hundreds of soldiers and tons of supplies.

At the core of Task Force Freedom was its largest element, General Mooney's Combined Civil Affairs Task Force. As previously determined, the 431st Civil Affairs Company assumed responsibility for the downtown and western areas of the city; the 432d for the eastern area. Each company had detailed maps of its assigned sectors showing the locations of designated food and water distribution points and hospitals. Throughout March, the civil affairs companies coordinated the delivery of food and water, performed damage assessments, worked with hospitals and clinics, and even cared for injured zoo animals. The 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) monitored food and water distribution sites and patrolled the city. These civil affairs troops drafted a plan for Kuwait's Army to remove tons of Iraqi munitions and monitored this effort.¹⁵

The Kuwait Task Force had deployed to Kuwait City with the other task force elements on 1 March. Their Kuwaiti counterparts remained behind in Dhahran two weeks longer for security reasons. When these Kuwaitis finally arrived, their individual ministries quickly claimed them. They found that they had to surrender their power to returning Kuwaitis

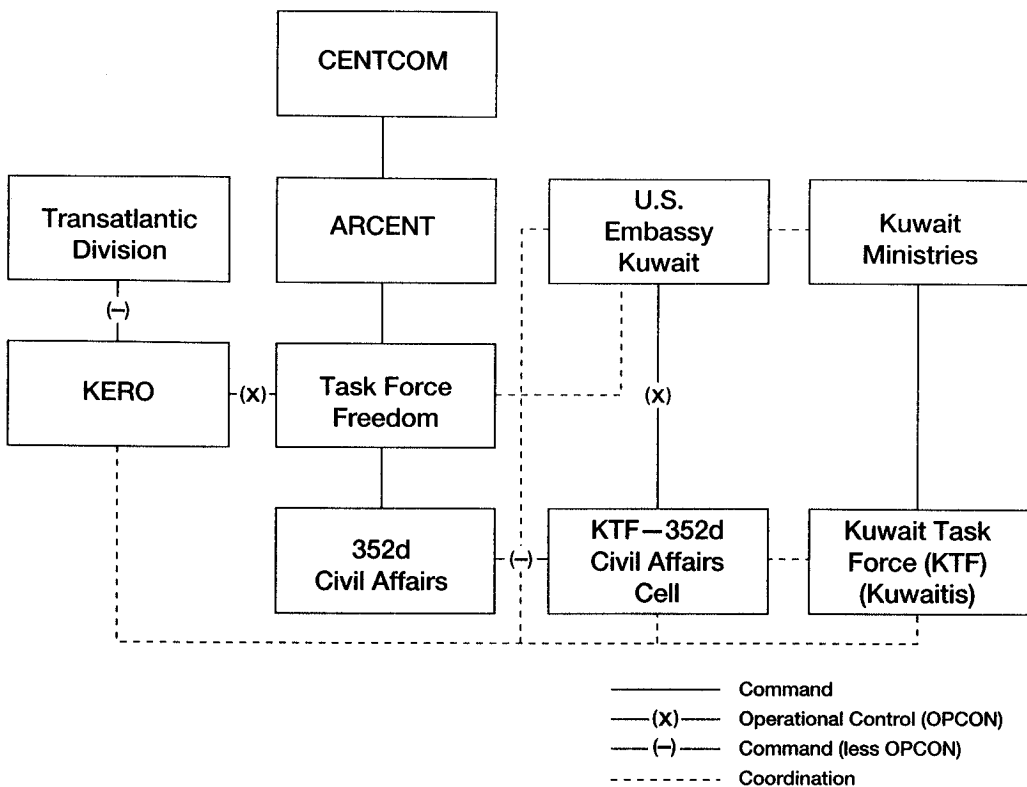


Chart 3—U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)

who had greater social status or political stature. Although the Kuwait Task Force was never relieved from its fundamental planning mission, the 352d Civil Affairs Command often pulled members to prepare briefings, perform damage assessments, or deliver emergency relief. (Chart 3)

Colonel Elliott became concerned that the Kuwait Task Force's mission was being disrupted and worried that it might be absorbed into the broader civil affairs mission. He wanted to move his unit from Camp Freedom on the outskirts of the city to the downtown area where, he believed, it could better maintain its integrity, have more freedom to continue planning, and coordinate more closely with the various ministries. He emphasized the importance of maintaining strong ties with the Kuwaiti representatives as they reestablished their ministries. Elliott sent Colonel Walz to find a suitable hotel. General Frix initially opposed the move, primarily because of concern about providing adequate security for the reservists, but General Mooney convinced him that the task force members needed to locate near their Kuwaiti partners.

Not all task force members agreed that relocation was as critical as Elliott maintained. Its fundamental planning mission, they insist, was



Power cable repair south of Kuwait City

never in jeopardy, and, in fact, after moving into a downtown hotel, task force members found themselves often traveling back and forth to Camp Freedom to do their work.¹⁶

Elliott, however, was correct in that the relationship each member had developed with his Kuwaiti counterpart became the solidifying factor driving the program forward. For example, the health experts on the task force knew the Ministry of Health officials well and toured medical facilities with them. During the first weeks, problems were often resolved through the cooperative relationships forged between the task force members and the Kuwaitis.

Gnehm saw the Kuwait Task Force as operating, in large part, under his supervision and maintained the close relationship that he had established in the States. He remained keenly interested in and supportive of the task force's activities.¹⁷

Task Force Freedom Missions

Based on General Frix's priorities and the results of preliminary damage assessments, soldiers quickly repaired essential facilities and func-

tions such as food distribution centers, hospitals, electricity, water, and transportation corridors (sea, land, and air) to meet the immediate health, safety, and security needs of the Kuwaiti people. They left the repair of less critical facilities for later.

Task Force Freedom's first priority was to assess damage in the areas of food, water, electric power, communication lines, public buildings, transportation, telecommunications, disease/vector control, police protection and security, and medical facilities and supplies. The task force created damage assessment survey teams to determine how long it would take to get facilities and services functioning again. The teams evaluated essential facilities to determine the extent of the damage and whether or not emergency repairs would restore minimal operations. The teams prepared formal reports and recommended and coordinated short-term remedial action.

The Combined Civil Affairs Task Force quickly established a standard civil-military operations center to coordinate the various assessment teams and other support elements. On arrival day, 1 March, the operations center dispatched three damage assessment survey teams; four days later, it dispatched 72 teams, each with four to eight members. Over the next six weeks, team members conducted over 1,400 damage surveys. Many teams included representatives from other services or other nations. For example, a British preventative medicine team surveyed two of the hospitals, a Navy team surveyed another two, and an ARCENT Medical Command team surveyed the rest.¹⁸

Civil affairs troops completed the last of the planned high-priority assessments on 8 March, eight days into the mission. These damage assessments, however, were preliminary inspections and did not provide all the detail the Corps' Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office required to let contracts for the repairs.

Also on 8 March, the civil affairs damage assessment teams began conducting joint surveys with Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office teams and continued to transfer engineer requirements to that office. After the Combined Civil Affairs Task Force turned its assessment over to the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office, that office conducted its own inspection and made its recommendations to the appropriate minister. Civil affairs soldiers had established cooperative relationships with certain ministries, such as electricity and water, that would make the Corps' survey work easier. The civil affairs teams smoothed the transfer of the damage survey work to the Corps, not only by conducting joint facilities inspections, but also by conducting a workshop and providing their damage reports and database to Locurcio's emergency operations chief, Wynne Fuller, on 8 March.

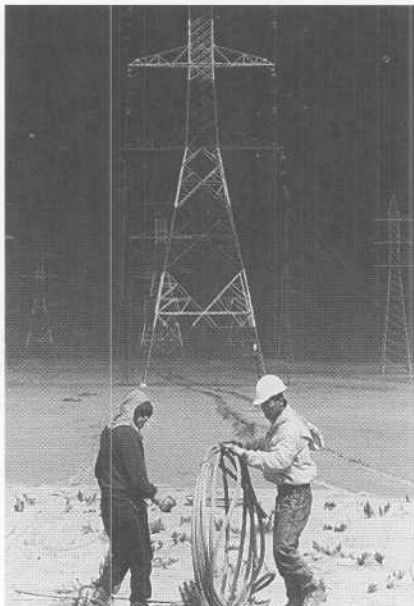
The involvement of Army engineers, civil affairs troops, and Corps members in damage assessments created some duplication of effort. At times, there was poor coordination within the civil affairs community itself. As a result, civil affairs damage assessment teams visited some sites five or six times. In perhaps the most extreme example of failure to coordinate, one food cooperative was inspected 27 times.¹⁹

Infrastructure

Beyond the damage surveys, restoration activities occurred primarily in the five categories into which the Kuwait Task Force had originally divided its teams: infrastructure, commerce, public security and safety, public services, and human services. Task Force Freedom focused its attention on repairing Kuwait's infrastructure, particularly its electrical grid. Ground and aerial observations of Kuwait and early reports from the damage survey teams indicated that restoring electric power was the most critical element for the success of the total civil-military mission. No utilities and critical infrastructure could function without electricity. The large desalinization plants needed power to produce fresh water; normal food distribution through supermarkets and shops required lighting and refrigeration.

Restoring power had a profound psychological, as well as physical, impact on the well-being of the Kuwaiti people. Smoke from oil fires had transformed day into night and fed the despair that gripped the city. The lack of electricity and consequent darkness and the sound of gunfire at night contributed to the perception of danger.

For months, Kuwait's residents had lived with Iraqi terror. Lighted streets symbolized an end to that terror and provided the sense of security residents needed to start rebuilding their lives and their country. For Bader Al-Qabandi and probably many other Kuwaiti residents, the restoration of electricity was the most tangible and gratify-



Electrical contractors remove a spacer from damaged power cables.

ing sign of recovery. Al-Qabandi described the city as a “ghost town.” The perpetual darkness, he explained, had left residents feeling lonely and frightened.

To a great extent, restoring electrical power signaled the return to normal life and became a measure of how successfully the government responded to the needs of its people. Task force member Col. Jack Lichtenstein agreed that restoring electric service would significantly boost public confidence in the government of Kuwait. “I believe that the restoration of municipal water and electric services is the key to returning Kuwait City to normalcy,” he reported.²⁰

The civil affairs infrastructure team directed the shipment and placement of Army and contractor generators at critical intersections and facilities, helped locate sources of temporary power for key facilities, and supervised installation. The Kuwaiti government had awarded a \$19.5 million contract to Caterpillar, Inc., to provide roughly 250 generators ranging in size from 8 to 1,275 kilowatts and a team to install them. The first Caterpillar generators arrived without their operators, so the 416th Engineer Command provided 40 additional 5–10 kilowatt generators from its own stock.

Working with the Ministry of Electricity, the U.S. Army mapped out the power grid. Engineers from the 416th Engineer Command and the 535th Engineer Detachment (Prime Power) strategically placed generators next to panel boxes to light city streets. Once the generators were in place, Army leaders encouraged the Kuwaitis to maintain and refuel them.

Damage to the electrical power infrastructure was much worse than anticipated. Electricity had flowed through the city until the first day of the ground war, but task force members now found power lines down and power plants needing major repairs. The main obstacle to delivering power to the city was the damage to transmission lines and distribution centers. Transmission cables between two plants and the communities they served were out in 47 places over a distance of 22 kilometers—the result of deliberate sabotage by retreating Iraqis. The Iraqis had cut the transmission cables, sometimes removing entire five-foot sections, and had destroyed over 40 distribution towers.

Kuwait had four very large power plants: Doha (east and west plants) north of Kuwait City; Shuwaikh near the downtown area; Shuaiba (north and south plants) at the port of Shuaiba; and Al-Zour near the Saudi Arabian border. All except Al-Zour were badly damaged. Shuaiba and Doha sustained moderate to heavy damage to boilers, turbines, cooling pumps, transformers, and control rooms. Doha also suffered heavy damage to its fuel storage and pumping facilities.

The antiquated Shuwaikh plant, though heavily damaged, had been out of service before the invasion and was not scheduled to be repaired. Soldiers from the 416th and the 352d worked 24 hours a day at the Doha and Shuaiba power plants. Army engineers convinced the Kuwaitis to focus their resources and effort on Doha because its transmission lines were in better shape and most of the substations leading from Doha had escaped damage.²¹

In addition to electrical power, the city needed enough potable water to restore a reasonable quality of life and maintain viable health standards. The water system, with its fresh and brackish (nonpotable water pumped from below ground) water components, had no production capability, and the reservoirs were badly depleted. The depleted reserves, low water pressure, and broken pipes left most sections of the city without water. Plant operators blended the brackish water drawn from wells in the central region of the country with potable, distilled water to provide flavor. The brackish water system, however, could not function because of damage to the pumping stations and associated distribution lines. Also, deadly mines and munitions littered the water well fields. The loss of these brackish wells caused shortages in the drinking water supply and left no water for irrigation, an essential element in the arid desert environment.

After the Navy Preventative Medicine Detachment determined that the water left in the reservoirs was safe for consumption, Mooney directed operators to open the main valves to feed water into northern Kuwait. But water still had to be trucked into southern Kuwait. The 22d Support Command transported the water, and civil affairs troops distributed it at predesignated sites.²²

The Kuwaitis had a very efficient system that combined power production and water desalinization. They pumped crude oil directly out of the ground into oil-fired boilers creating super-heated steam to run the turbines. After the steam degraded partially, they used it to generate water, roughly 250 million gallons a day. Three desalinization plants, collocated with the Doha, Shuaiba, and Al-Zour power plants, normally provided the distilled water for Kuwait. But without electricity, these plants could not resupply the reservoirs. Also, the pumping stations and distribution lines had been damaged or destroyed. The water shortage prompted the Kuwaiti government to curtail house service to four days a week.

Based on their initial planning estimate that 1 million people in Kuwait City would require 40 million gallons of water a day, the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Program staff, before leaving Washington, had hired three tanker ships to transport water to the city. Two of these ships provided roughly 16 million gallons to the reservoir system. They had

also contracted for the delivery of more than 3 million gallons of bulk water from Turkey. The Turkish contractor brought over 500 water tanker trucks into Kuwait City. Finally, the Kuwaitis had purchased bottled water for delivery to Kuwait. In the first few days after liberation, 31 flatbed trucks carrying bottled water arrived in the city.²³

The Civil Affairs Task Force oversaw the delivery and distribution of the water, a job sometimes complicated by violence. During the second week of March, a Saudi contractor was reportedly shot and killed while delivering water in Hawalli, a Palestinian neighborhood. Two other drivers and their vehicles were unaccounted for. The task force also received reports that Kuwaiti police and military personnel forced truck drivers to make special water deliveries to the homes of certain officials.

The water shortage soon eased. By late April, Kuwait's power plants were producing 82 million gallons of fresh, desalinated water a day.²⁴

Repairing the sewage collection and disposal system was also a high priority for Task Force Freedom. The sanitary system, one of the oldest components of Kuwait's infrastructure, had been serviced by three major treatment plants—Ardiya, Jahra, and Rikka. An extended period of disuse of the sanitary system during the occupation caused major blockages, stagnation, and mechanical failures. Moreover, the Iraqis had looted and destroyed all the water treatment offices, laboratories, and workshops and stolen all the portable equipment. The Rikka plant was totally inoperable. Both the Ardiya and the Jahra treatment plants required major maintenance before operations could resume. Not only were the mechanical systems damaged, the collection and distribution lines had numerous breaks. As a result of war damage, millions of gallons of raw sewage bypassed the treatment facilities each day and poured directly into the Gulf of Arabia. Repair of the sewage system would continue long past the emergency phase.

Repairing the ports, roads, and airport was critical to executing the recovery effort and restoring the country's economic life. Shuwaikh port, Kuwait's largest, in the northern part of the city, consisted of four harbors with berths for small craft and container/breakbulk operations, as well as drydock and shipyard facilities. The port suffered damage to its cargo-handling facilities, buildings, fenders, and cranes, while sunken ships clogged the channel. Shuaiba port, south of the city, consisted of three harbors with 20 berths and container/breakbulk operations. It also suffered damaged to buildings, pavements, and cranes, though its shipping channels were clear. Although neither port had a central backup power system, the piers remained structurally sound so ships with their own cargo-handling capability could use the ports.



Facilities at Shuwaikh port were badly damaged.

An unimpaired flow of air traffic was also critical. Located 15 miles from the downtown area, Kuwait International Airport served over 3,500 people on more than 20 flights per day before the Iraqi occupation. It was a major center of commerce and primary gateway for passenger traffic. The airport, site of a major battle between the 1st Marine Division and Iraqi forces, had suffered extensive structural, mechanical, and electrical damage. Battle damage and Iraqi sabotage left the two major runways inoperable. The charred hulk of a British 747 sat prominently on the runway. The ground control tower had been destroyed. Artillery fire had left one terminal so badly damaged that it had to be demolished. The second terminal, though also badly damaged, remained structurally sound. Other damage ranged from severe vandalism throughout the airport complex to crater damage from cluster bombs, numerous barriers (abandoned vehicles and demolished commercial aircraft), and destruction of runway lighting and instrument landing systems.²⁵

The Iraqi occupation and the ground and air wars had left all major roads leading into Kuwait badly damaged. Coalition bombing had cratered Al-Abdaly Road, the main route running north into Iraq. Damage to the roads caused by obstacle preparation was significant at

places along the Saudi border where Iraqis had concentrated their defense. Eleven miles of the northbound Nuwaisib Road, a six-lane expressway connecting Saudi Arabia and Kuwait City, had been completely destroyed. Iraqi soldiers had ripped up 12.4 miles of the southbound lane to impede traffic. Six tank barrier trenches (2.5 meters wide and 10 meters deep), flanked by minefields, cut through the lanes in both directions. Al-Salmi Road, leading southwest to Saudi Arabia, was also badly damaged.

Mines and bombs had carved craters in the major roads within Kuwait City. At major intersections Iraqi soldiers had erected barriers and guard houses that obstructed traffic. They had set up crude masonry bunkers on major overpasses to prevent coalition partners from moving into the center of the city.²⁶

Commerce

The civil affairs commerce team helped Kuwaiti officials purchase and deliver emergency supplies and helped them contract for over \$500 million of emergency supplies including electrical generators. Largely as a result of the team's activities, 68,000 tons of emergency food, water, and medical supplies were shipped into Kuwait in the first three weeks of March. The team also helped the Kuwaitis rebuild their labor force, bring in commercial vendors who had been stuck at the border, and reestablish the banking and currency system.²⁷

Public Security and Safety

Task Force Freedom also promoted public security and safety. Sprinkled throughout the city were checkpoints manned first by Kuwaiti resistance, then by Kuwaiti soldiers, and finally by Kuwaiti police. Military police from the task force manned the various checkpoints alongside Kuwaiti soldiers and police to smooth this last transition.

Civil affairs personnel helped the Kuwaiti police repair their vehicles, communications systems, and buildings. Ten automotive mechanics from an Army Reserve maintenance company and two from the Tennessee Army National Guard cannibalized parts from nearly 500 wrecked police cars to piece together 50 vehicles. They gathered all the abandoned police cars at one place and performed "automotive triage."²⁸

Two members of the 308th Civil Affairs Group, S. Sgt. Robert Haglund and 1st Lt. Michael Wanta, both police officers from Green Bay, Wisconsin, were dispatched to the police academy. They grappled with the problem of a huge number of guns left behind by Iraqis in a city that had one of the world's lowest crime rates. The Kuwaiti police,

who had never carried guns before, worried about possible violence as they took control of the city from Kuwait's Army. Haglund and Wanta trained them in weapons use and taught basic SWAT team tactics. They also developed a police manual for translation into Arabic. Civil affairs soldiers helped build the police force up to 6,100 and reopen the police stations. On 25 March 1991, the Ministry of Interior took over the operation of all police stations in the city, and Kuwaiti soldiers returned to their barracks.²⁹

Public Services

The civil affairs public service team worked with Kuwait's Ministry of Information to establish a media support center and reestablish government radio and television stations. Soldiers installed Motorola radios in police vehicles and distributed hundreds of portable radios in Kuwait's neighborhoods. Task Force Freedom's radio broadcasts and leaflets provided residents with vital information about food distribution, medical care, and other public service announcements. The task force ultimately provided two truckloads of telecommunications equipment.³⁰

During the occupation, the Kuwaitis had burned trash once a week, but this response was inadequate. Officials worried that the mounting trash could create serious health problems. Civil affairs personnel encouraged the Kuwaitis to award a contract for trash collection. After weeks of delay, the Kuwaiti government signed a \$750,000 contract with Waste Management, Inc., to remove garbage, debris, and junked vehicles from Kuwait City. Waste Management, Inc., had already moved into Kuwait in hopes of receiving a lucrative contract and was picking up garbage, tearing down Iraqi "pill-box" fortifications, and filling foxholes. Kuwaiti officials eventually signed a 12-month, \$13.8 million contract with that firm. When task force members later discovered that trash removal was not being conducted equitably in all neighborhoods, they complained to the Minister of Health. Civil affairs personnel also gave the Kuwaitis the supplies and training needed to control insects and rodents.³¹

Civil affairs soldiers even arranged the printing and distribution of new postage stamps and encouraged the Ministry of Justice to reestablish the court system quickly.

Human Services

The civil affairs human services team struggled to ensure that the food supply was adequate and distributed equitably. Immediately after the liberation, the 22d Support Command brought in food that the Kuwaiti government had purchased. Transporting food by truck from the staging areas in Saudi Arabia was difficult. Early on, the push pack-

ages that Mooney's command had put together proved to be critical. In the first three days, dozens of truckloads of food arrived and were turned over to the Kuwaiti authorities for distribution. The truck drivers and food distributors were reservists and guardsmen who worked in shipping and receiving in civilian life.

Sadly, food distribution fell victim to partisan politics. The Kuwaiti government ultimately owned most of the available food supplies, and the ministers who had recently returned wanted to participate in the distribution. Emergency food relief thus became a Kuwaiti operation with civil affairs personnel acting as advisors.

At a meeting between civil affairs and Kuwaiti representatives on 3 March, the Kuwaitis revealed that their government was divided on the most politically acceptable way to distribute food. The easiest method would have been to use the existing neighborhood cooperatives. However, during the occupation, these cooperatives had been run by members of the Kuwaiti resistance, and the returning ministers preferred to take credit for food purchases by establishing separate distribution centers. Officials debated for 10 days, during which time little food was distributed. The government ultimately used the existing cooperatives. After the cooperatives had been fully stocked, the remaining food went into a central warehouse from which the cooperatives could be resupplied.³²

Kuwaiti politics affected not only the location of food distribution sites, but also the equity of food distribution. Many foreign nationals—such as Palestinians, Filipinos, Sri Lankans, and Iraqis—lived in Kuwait at the time of the invasion. Some Kuwaiti officials were anxious that the government's resources not be used to benefit the foreign nationals, particularly Palestinians, whom they perceived as Iraqi collaborators. Initially, some long-time Iraqi and Palestinian residents were denied food at the distribution sites in certain neighborhoods such as El-Achmady, Hawalli, and Salymia. In the first weeks, at some distribution sites, the Kuwaitis received more food and water than the Palestinian residents or other foreign nationals.³³

Civil affairs personnel who preferred a more equitable distribution of food and water became frustrated. They investigated reported inconsistencies in the operation of the cooperatives and worked with the Ministry of Commerce to improve food distribution. They monitored the distribution of food, water, and cooking gas in neighborhoods with many foreign nationals and reported that the discrimination in food and water deliveries caused increased tension in those neighborhoods. Ambassador Gnehm, characteristically outspoken, charged that the cooperatives operated under confusing, overly bureaucratic restrictions that resulted in unfair food distribution. He insisted that all residents be

treated equally. With his support, Task Force Freedom recommended to Kuwaiti officials that they adopt more uniform and equitable procedures.

By late March, Kuwaiti officials had resolved many of the distribution problems, and tensions eased. By early April, vendors were selling fresh chickens, fruits, vegetables, sugar, and other commodities on the street (though at twice the preinvasion prices), and more products reached the shelves of food stores around the city each day.³⁴

Civil affairs officers and enlisted personnel also documented human rights abuses. They made hundreds of visits to Hawalli and many other Palestinian neighborhoods to interview residents and gather information. Looking for emerging patterns, they carefully recorded the extent and types of abuses, the geographic location, and the perpetrators. Civil affairs personnel visited some neighborhoods unannounced in the middle of the night.³⁵

Based on discussions with Palestinians and other sources of information, task force members estimated that 400 to 500 Palestinians were arrested and roughly 40 to 50 were executed by the Kuwaiti resistance or died while being tortured. Although the figures were alarming, task force member Maj. Andrew Natsios observed, they could have been much higher, given the fact that Kuwait City had 250,000 Palestinian residents.³⁶ The efforts of the civil affairs soldiers and others from Task Force Freedom reduced the number of violent incidents, particularly during the first critical days following the cease-fire. There were no large-scale systematic human rights abuses.

Task Force Freedom quickly organized medical teams to assess Kuwait's health care systems. They concluded that the Kuwaiti health care systems were capable of providing emergency services to the residents. There were enough medical supplies for three to six months. Iraqi soldiers had completely looted some of the specialty hospitals for cancer treatment, kidney transplant, and maternity care. Although the soldiers had stolen most of the equipment and supplies from the city's medical facilities, the buildings remained structurally sound. The Iraqis had allowed the general hospitals to function because they needed them. These hospitals had emergency generators for power but no water for cooling or any other purpose.

The ARCENT medical command helped resolve the problem of evacuating Iraqi prisoners of war from the civilian hospitals. The 105th Medical Detachment provided outpatient clinics, three medical evacuation helicopters, and six ambulances for troops and conducted a daily medical evacuation flight between Kuwait City and King Khalid Military City.³⁷

In the first weeks, soldiers delivered dozens of truckloads of donated medical supplies to hospitals and a central medical supply point and



A soldier from Camp Freedom feeds an injured elephant.

steered them to the locations where the need was greatest. Medical personnel received an unexpected bonus when civil affairs soldiers working with VII Corps units in southern Iraq made an important discovery. First Lt. William Burke of the 418th Civil Affairs Company, a police officer in civilian life, had led a small team into abandoned bunkers near Safwan, Iraq. The team had stumbled onto an underground field hospital, only recently vacated by the Republican Guard, complete with beds and equipment for about sixty patients. They found several bunkers loaded with all types of medical supplies—crutches, X-ray machines, wheelchairs, and literally tons of band-

ages. Having spent 12 years in Saudi Arabia as a child, Burke was able to read the Arabic markings on the equipment and supply containers. He realized that most of the supplies and equipment had been looted from Kuwaiti hospitals. Over the next four days, he and his team made over 20 round trips trucking the supplies to the Ministry of Health building in Kuwait City.³⁸

The human services team also coordinated the activities of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other relief organizations, as well as the activities of civil affairs volunteers. For example, on 1 March 1991, U.S. soldiers discovered 300 severely handicapped and retarded patients at a social hospital, starving and cold, helpless in their barred cribs, crying and lying in the dark in their own waste. Anthills dotted the floor of the filthy room. Over the following weeks, a dozen volunteers from the 432d Civil Affairs Company diligently scrubbed floors, washed windows, fixed generators, bathed and spoon-fed the patients, changed their sheets, and pushed their wheelchairs.³⁹

Civil affairs personnel assisted both people and animals. During the occupation, large dairy herds had been brought from farms into the city and hidden in backyards and garages. After over a week without food and water, the animals were dying. A U.S. Army veterinarian warned

Mooney that hundreds more would soon die without water. To save them, Mooney temporarily diverted the water that soldiers at Camp Freedom had planned to use for long overdue showers. Col. Phil Alm, chief of food services assessment, organized a program to feed and water the animals. During the first two days of the program, he personally brought water trucks to the herds. Soldiers delivered 30,000 gallons of water a day to more than 1,000 cows and expanded their feeding program to include zoo animals.⁴⁰

Task Force Freedom Command, Control, and Coordination

Senior Task Force Freedom officials developed a close, cooperative working relationship that enabled the task force to function effectively. General Frix handled the day-to-day administration of the task force and dealt with Ambassador Gnehm, General Yeosock, and the maneuver commanders. General Guest focused on logistics support, and General Mooney oversaw civil affairs. Frix, Guest, and Mooney were in constant communication. They shared their office space, their housing, and often their meals. They held daily staff meetings to discuss priorities and often tried to resolve the pressing issues of the day over dinner. Each evening, Mooney provided Frix with a simple account of current civil affairs activities and highlighted the civil affairs issues requiring Frix's attention. Mooney described the relationship between his command and the task force as "superb." His command, he later recalled, quickly established credibility within Task Force Freedom and was left to perform its mission with little interference.⁴¹

The close working relationship that Frix and his staff established with the U.S. Embassy also contributed to the success of the recovery operation. Both Frix and Mooney developed cordial, cooperative relationships with Ambassador Gnehm. Frix had received explicit instructions to cooperate and coordinate with the U.S. Embassy but not to take direction from the Ambassador. Frix became an integral part of the Ambassador's "country team," but took his direction from General Yeosock at ARCENT headquarters. Mooney and Gnehm met frequently, even daily during one period, traveled together to meetings with the Crown Prince, and forged a bond of mutual respect. To enhance the coordination, Mooney kept civil affairs representatives on Gnehm's staff.

Ambassador Gnehm understood and enthusiastically supported Task Force Freedom's mission; in turn, the task force assisted the embassy. For example, civil affairs troops repaired the embassy's roof, purged its water tanks, repaired its plumbing, and ran communication

wires. The cooperative spirit among team members, Gnehm noted, ultimately made the operation succeed. He praised the U.S. military in Kuwait for being "highly responsive" and bringing to bear resources not available elsewhere. A few military officials from CENTCOM and the Army Staff, however, expressed concern that the Army's relationship with the Ambassador was becoming too close.⁴²

Coordination between Task Force Freedom and CENTCOM proved more challenging. The CENTCOM J-5 staff complained that they did not receive the task force's daily reports directly. The reports went to the Army Staff in the Pentagon, but CENTCOM did not receive its copy until 24 hours later, through the U.S. Embassy. These reports provided the J-5's only communication link with Kuwait. When the Joint Staff called Colonel Blount on the CENTCOM J-5 staff for information, Blount had to call Mooney's task force directly or rely on the written reports received through the embassy. Blount rarely spoke to the embassy by telephone.⁴³

Task Force Freedom/Kuwaiti Relations

The relationship between the task force and the Kuwaiti government, though generally good, had occasional strains resulting from cultural differences. Barbara Leaf, a Kuwait specialist with the State Department's Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs, aptly observed that the Kuwaitis, though a gentle, sociable people, did not often make decisions quickly or work with the same sense of urgency as U.S. officials. Moreover, they had suffered a great trauma, which affected their ability to respond to and resolve problems, particularly during the first six weeks.⁴⁴ General Frix occasionally became frustrated by the lack of direction from Kuwaiti officials. He sometimes found their practices to be slow and inefficient and conceded that his troops were not well prepared to deal with the Arab culture.⁴⁵

The civil affairs troops, experienced in disaster relief, brought an understanding of emergency response that the Kuwaitis lacked. Without their help, the Kuwaitis would have had greater difficulty coping with the situation, and the government's critics might have raised questions about its effectiveness and legitimacy.⁴⁶

The more relaxed work ethic of the Kuwaitis, who had relied heavily on a labor pool of foreign nationals before the war, sometimes disappointed and frustrated Army officials. Mooney conceded that he had difficulty getting the Kuwaitis to administer the water distribution, food supply, and other systems that his soldiers had established. For example, Mooney visited a telecommunications site that was out of service. He

found that all the system needed was a new battery and gas in the generator, but no one had refueled the generator. Gnehm and Mooney repeatedly urged the Crown Prince and other Kuwaitis to assume more responsibility for maintaining the systems that were in place. The Kuwaitis had traditionally hired foreign nationals to manage these systems but now were reluctant to use those workers. The government wanted to control the number of foreign nationals who lived and worked in the country, but it also needed these people to operate elements of the infrastructure.⁴⁷

Task Force Freedom Closeout

Planning for the closeout of Task Force Freedom began soon after its creation. In early March, General Yeosock and his senior staff briefed General Schwarzkopf on the support that the Army was provided in Kuwait. They also discussed when and how to transfer responsibility for the effort to other Department of Defense agencies.

The damage assessment teams had completed their final reports, and emergency services in the areas of food, water, medical supplies, and transportation were complete. ARCENT proposed that Task Force Freedom be disestablished as soon as Iraq signed the cease-fire agreement and a Department of Defense representative could assume the mission. General Schwarzkopf directed that the task force remain in place until ARCENT forces left Kuwait. At the same time, he authorized ARCENT to phase out task force elements that were no longer needed.⁴⁸

On 15 March, Secretary of the Army Michael P. W. Stone and General Kelly met in Kuwait with General Mooney, General Frix, Colonel Locurcio, and Ambassador Gnehm. Secretary Stone, apparently anxious to move the operation to its conclusion, asked Kelly and Frix to indicate the conditions that would have to be met before the theater commander transferred authority through the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of the Army.⁴⁹

As critical supplies were distributed and more essential services restored in Kuwait, military leaders found that they could reduce the number of soldiers involved. They could release the tactical civil affairs companies to ARCENT for redeployment or other missions. The ARCENT operations staff drafted a plan to reduce the task force and pull out nonessential personnel.

At General Yeosock's direction, the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (–) was released to ARCENT on 30 March and returned to Saudi Arabia for redeployment. ARCENT released the 431st Civil Affairs Company to the XVIII Airborne Corps for redeployment on 31 March and the

432d to the VII Corps on 6 April. General Yeosock ordered the 22d Support Command to reduce its operations to the minimum level required to support the remaining task force units by 6 April. By that time, ARCENT planned to reduce the task force from over 2,000 to 1,470 people.⁵⁰

After receiving a very positive report from General Frix's representative on 8 April, General Schwarzkopf recommended to Secretary of Defense Cheney that he declare 30 April as the official end of the emergency phase of the Kuwait operation and shift the executive agency from the theater commander to the Secretary of the Army. The Secretary of Defense adopted the recommendation.⁵¹

Its mission complete, Task Force Freedom was formally disestablished on 30 April. By that time, there had been significant improvements in the country's infrastructure. The task force had sought to provide sufficient electrical power to support food and water distribution, medical services, and minimum essential communications requirements for public information—an estimated 3,200 megawatts. Now, 91 percent of Kuwait City was serviced by central station power and 9 percent by portable generators. Electrical production (2,100 megawatts) outstripped demand (1,020 megawatts) by 2 to 1. The city had more than enough water. The goal had been to produce 120 million gallons a day, and Doha, Al-Zour, and Shuaiba now produced 82 million gallons a day.

Corps contractors had nearly completed emergency repairs to the major highway connecting Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and had begun repairing other roads and bridges. The Shuaiba port had reopened. Kuwait International Airport, where civilian and military aircraft flowed freely, returned to Kuwaiti control on 30 April. All bunkers, abandoned combat vehicles, and impediments had been cleared from the highways. The last "derelict" tank in Kuwait City had been removed on 15 March, a key event in the return to normalcy. Telephone service had been restored to Kuwait City's downtown commercial center.

Kuwaiti ministries had assumed responsibility for public security. Kuwait established mobile units (military or other law enforcement) to patrol and secure points of departure and the border, as well as key food and water distribution points. The police force numbered 6,100 with 250 police cars and 16 police stations in operation. Of the existing 15 fire stations, 10 had reopened. All six general hospitals were open, but not all of the specialty hospitals. Most of the needed medical supplies were in stock. The public health system operated effectively with solid waste removal and treatment systems in place.

Critical information could be disseminated over two FM radio and two television stations. About 90 percent of the city had local telephone

service, and 35 percent of the prewar international telephone line capability had been restored. Public bus service had begun on 18 April. Final distribution of essential food items had been completed on 15 April. Commercial facilities and cooperatives operated smoothly.⁵²

Frix's staff submitted its final status report on 1 May, marking the official end of the task force. The closeout of Task Force Freedom also marked the end of the restoration of emergency services in Kuwait and the beginning of Department of Defense recovery activities.⁵³

Despite the remarkable improvements in the city, by May few of the Kuwaitis who had sat out the occupation in exile in neighboring countries or in London and Paris had returned. Roughly 150,000 Kuwaitis and 170,000 Palestinians (out of Kuwait's prewar population of 2.2 million) had fled the country. Most of the Sri Lankans, Indians, and other nationalities who formed the bulk of Kuwait's labor force were gone. Despite urging from the Kuwaiti government, only 5 percent of the country's laborers had returned to their jobs. The population of the country was roughly half what it had been before the invasion. Some hesitated to return to the city until it had been fully restored. The power plants produced so much electricity that residents were encouraged to leave their lights on day and night to keep the turbines running smoothly, but the electrical distribution system had yet to be rebuilt. Without schools and air conditioning for the hot months approaching, most of the exiles were expected to stay away awhile longer.⁵⁴

General Yeosock's decision to use ARCENT (Forward) headquarters as the core for operations in Kuwait proved to be a good one. It effectively represented ARCENT and CENTCOM in the area, besides functioning as Task Force Freedom. The task force coordinated the Army's civil and military operations. It held daily meetings with the Kuwaiti military, all coordinated with the U.S. Embassy. Task Force Freedom was a versatile, flexible organization capable of responding to the broad range of needs in Kuwait. The task force continually reshaped itself to meet the mission. It could grow or shrink by as many as 300 people a day depending on its missions. Frix brought forward the resources and capabilities such as engineering that he needed at a given time. The task force could effectively execute a number of missions simultaneously. The organization allowed civil affairs troops to concentrate on uniquely civil affairs missions, while another element handled the logistics support missions. The task force could help set up the cease-fire talks at Safwan, Iraq, or assist displaced persons, while leaving its civil affairs element free to restore the city.⁵⁵

The Combined Civil Affairs Task Force was also uniquely suited to the Kuwait mission. The civilian expertise of the civil affairs soldiers was

invaluable. Mooney confidently observed that the 352d demonstrated to the Active Army that civil affairs was an “untapped resource.”⁵⁶ Secretary Cheney later congratulated the civil affairs command for its key role in restoring basic services in Kuwait. “Your outstanding performance,” he wrote, “proved that a vital link exists between military service in our country and the civilian sector.”⁵⁷

The Kuwait operation also highlighted the contributions of the Army Reserves. More than 80 percent of the soldiers in the operation came from the Reserve components. These soldiers, who in civilian life were doctors, lawyers, city planners, bankers, and even a veterinarian, brought to the operation unique experience and skills that did not exist in the Active Army.

Twenty-seven civil affairs reservists who had served in Panama avoided problems they had experienced during Operation JUST CAUSE. For that operation, Army officials had patched together a civil affairs structure. They requested individual volunteers, rather than activating entire units, so these volunteers had to spend time becoming familiar with each other. For the Kuwait operation, by contrast, Army officials activated entire units. Mooney noted, “I think we did it [the mission] in a far quicker fashion than people suspected we would do it. I tend to believe that our planning and the relationship that we established with Kuwait was part of that process.”⁵⁸

The experience left General Frix with a favorable impression of civil-military operations in the Reserve components. It was, he concluded, “a great example of the total Army in action.” The Reserve components, particularly civil affairs, Frix noted, was “ideally suited” for operations such as the Kuwait recovery. The general, who had little previous experience with civil affairs, was apparently so impressed with the civil affairs soldiers that he asked to be their senior rater so he could sign their performance evaluations and recommend them for awards.⁵⁹

Although the civil affairs soldiers performed their tasks extremely well, they would have been even more effective if they had been included in the early planning. Mooney later complained that his command and the Kuwait Task Force planned their operations in a vacuum. They did not know how CENTCOM was shaping the war plan and were not familiar with CENTCOM’s timetable. “I think we would have done a little better job, made some improvements,” Mooney conceded, “if we would have known what the war fighters were thinking.”⁶⁰

The civil affairs units and the other elements of Task Force Freedom contributed significantly to the nation-building process. Army leaders remained keenly aware of the need to make Kuwait self-sufficient as quickly as possible. The task force provided administrative support and

logistics capabilities, but the Kuwaiti government purchased most of the food, water, and other assets. In its after action report, the Combined Civil Affairs Task Force noted, “the Command always saw its mission as that of working itself out of its job, by advising the Kuwaitis on how to do something rather than simply doing that something itself.”⁶¹ Mooney and others feared that if U.S. troops stayed very long, the Kuwaitis would become dependent on them.

Equally important was the sense of good will that these soldiers left behind. Many of them experienced firsthand the warmth and gratitude of Kuwait’s residents. For example, when soldiers brought their water trucks into local communities, residents poured out to greet them and brought them tea. Children asked them for autographs. “What registered,” explained one Army captain, “was the experience of being with the people—seeing the kids smiling.”⁶²

The soldiers advised the Kuwaiti government about receiving contract proposals, awarding contracts, and delivering services necessary to support the postwar population. Under this contracting program, which totaled over \$550 million, the Kuwaitis procured 746 vehicles for police, sanitation, public transportation, and other government ministries.

Task Force Freedom provided 12,500 metric tons of food, 12.8 million liters of water, 2.8 million liters of fuel, 25 truckloads of compressed gas, 64 generators, 200 batteries, 1,250 tons of medical supplies, and 2 truckloads of telecommunications equipment. The Combined Civil Affairs Task Force coordinated 35 supply convoys (over 1,700 vehicles) and 48 aircraft missions to deliver firefighting and other essential equipment. “Nowhere in modern history,” observed General Frix, “has any field army made the rapid transition from an aggressive ground offensive to an active restoration effort in the manner that ARCENT/Third Army did in the wake of DESERT STORM.” Colonel Elliott perhaps best summed up the task force’s work when he observed that through its efforts not a single Kuwaiti died from lack of water, food, or medical care.⁶³

As Task Force Freedom executed the emergency response phase, another Army element, the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office, did the same.

Emergency Response Phase

The Pentagon

As the Army Corps of Engineers and Task Force Freedom personnel in Kuwait executed the emergency response, Pentagon officials continued their efforts. Discussions among senior officials at the Defense Department, State Department, and White House about the scope and administration of the projected recovery effort resulted in a more definitive policy statement on 1 March, immediately following the liberation. Secretary of Defense Cheney informed the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and the three service secretaries that U.S. defense agencies would provide recovery assistance to Kuwait in two phases. During the initial "emergency phase" the theater commander, General Schwarzkopf, would have operational control over all Department of Defense elements in Southwest Asia that were involved in planning or executing Kuwait reconstruction. Further, such assistance would be done only with the approval of "the President's senior representative to Kuwait," Ambassador Gnehm. The initial emergency work would remain a CENTCOM responsibility. The emergency phase, Secretary Cheney indicated, would focus on restoring emergency life support services.

It would be followed by a second phase called "reconstruction," the date of which he would determine later. During the reconstruction phase, the Secretary of the Army would serve as the executive agent for all Department of Defense assistance to Kuwait reconstruction. It was understood that the Army would have the largest role in reconstruction. The Secretary of the Army's authority would encompass all elements and offices previously controlled by the theater commander and would be exercised through a Department of Defense representative from the Army assigned directly to Kuwait.¹

¹ Secretary Richard Cheney, Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 1 Mar 1991, Subj: Organization of the Department of Defense for Assistance in the Reconstruction of Kuwait, Kuwait Reconstruction: General, ASA(ILE) Files.

Army leaders debated whether the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works or the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics and Environment should have primary responsibility for the recovery effort. They determined that although the work involved reconstruction of civil infrastructure, which normally came under the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, it would be done in a military environment. Therefore, the Assistant Secretary for Installations, Logistics and Environment, Susan Livingstone, who had responsibility for the Army's military construction, should have the lead. The Secretary of the Army had already given Livingstone's office responsibility for overseeing all Army actions associated with emergency and reconstruction assistance to Kuwait, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works and the Army General Counsel.²

On 14 March, Assistant Secretary Livingstone created the Kuwait Reconstruction Task Force (KRTF) within the Army operations staff to act as focal point for all Kuwait recovery issues and information passing to or through the Army Staff and the Army Secretariat. The task force monitored the recovery effort and regularly reported directly to Livingstone's office. More specifically, its primary responsibility was to maintain daily communication between the Corps' Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office and Livingstone's staff. The task force coordinated important recovery issues and prepared detailed briefings for the Army Chief of Staff.

Livingstone also chaired an oversight group called the "KRTF General Officer Steering Committee," with senior leaders representing the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management; the Army Corps of Engineers; the General Counsel and the Auditor General; and Army Staff members involved with operations, logistics, plans, congressional liaison, public information, research and development, and legal services. The committee functioned as a forum for sharing information, not as a decisionmaking body. It enabled Livingstone to develop a unified Army position on key issues. The committee met monthly; representatives from the same offices met more informally as a "Council of Colonels."

The Kuwait Reconstruction Task Force and the steering committee gave the Kuwait mission heightened visibility within the Army Staff. They

²Susan Livingstone, interv by author, Washington, D.C., 18 Jun 1992, pp. 2-3; Kelly, interv by author, 7 Sep 1991, p. 13; John W. Shannon, Under Secretary of the Army, Memorandum for Principal Officials of HQDA, 24 Jan 1991, Kuwait Reconstruction: Command and Control, Office of History Files.

also provided a mechanism for staff coordination and for identifying and resolving problems.³

Involving the Army Staff and specifically Assistant Secretary Livingstone was important for several reasons. The effort to reconstruct Kuwait was politically sensitive. Army leaders and others were concerned about the flood of media reports predicting billions of dollars worth of construction work in Kuwait. They hoped that Assistant Secretary Livingstone could help lower unrealistic expectations. Members of Congress asked her to attend public meetings to publicize the fact that the Defense Department had a relatively small role in contracting for Kuwait reconstruction work.⁴ This effort, however, had only limited success because the widely publicized, exaggerated media reports continued. Hundreds of anxious contractors and individuals flooded Corps offices in Washington and Winchester with calls seeking work. New telephone lines installed to handle the calls were quickly clogged. Another reason for Livingstone's involvement was that some Army officials believed the Army Corps of Engineers operated too independently and was trying to carve out a large, long-term role for itself in Kuwait. They did not want to see a repeat of the massive Saudi construction program of the 1980s. Army officials wanted to exert greater control over the Corps, especially since the Army did not yet have a well-defined role. They wanted to focus on the immediate requirements in Kuwait and minimize any discussion of follow-on roles for Army agencies, including the Corps.

From Livingstone's perspective, civil affairs soldiers and Corps personnel in Kuwait initially had a "tremendous degree of power with very little oversight," in part because the theater commander was hundreds of miles away in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She charged that the Corps had issued public statements about its involvement in Kuwait before they had been approved in the Pentagon. It was her responsibility, she explained, to ensure that public statements made by Army agencies accurately reflected U.S. government policy.⁵

The Army Staff had, in fact, directed the Corps to coordinate media announcements with its public affairs office, and the Corps made a determined effort to comply. But the coordination process often became complicated and frustrating. At one point, Pentagon officials directed the

³Kuwait Reconstruction Task Force (KRTF) History (draft), n.d., Kuwait Reconstruction: KRTF History, Office of History Files; Lt. Col. Joseph Alexander, interview by author, Washington, D.C., 27 Apr 1992, pp. 6, 13.

⁴Livingstone interview, p. 28.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 5–7, 16, 19.

Corps to refer reporters to a State Department official, but the State Department official referred the reporters back to the Corps. On another occasion, Army officials vacillated, first approving and then disapproving a Corps public statement.⁶

After his initial meeting with Locurcio, Gnehm had written a blistering memo reminding the Corps that its role was limited to technical support such as repairing buildings, roads, and utilities. The memo made its way back to the Pentagon and seemed to confirm fears about the Corps' involvement. Army officials recognized that the Ambassador had the lead in foreign affairs. It would have been "unseemly," Livingstone explained, for Army officials to tell the Kuwaiti government what it could do or what the U.S. government could or would do. Rather, Army officials had to wait for the State Department and the Kuwaiti government to develop a policy. Livingstone and the other officials wanted to ensure that the Corps' activities were coordinated with Gnehm and fit within the framework of official U.S. policy.⁷

Assistant Secretary Livingstone recognized that the Defense Department planned to assist the Kuwaitis only until they could get back on their feet. Its role would be that of a support organization whose actions were defined by national command authorities.⁸

Livingstone also believed part of her job involved insulating the Corps from U.S. businesses looking for work and from congressional queries. She indicated that she wanted to free the Corps from the politics of the situation so it could focus on the actual recovery operations. She and her staff reviewed acquisition and contracting strategies, evaluated small business opportunities and policy, and ensured that those policies were coordinated with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development, and Acquisition. She served as the link between the Army Staff, U.S. businesses, and Congress to ensure that the proper authorities and funding were in place. Reconstruction also required much coordination with other federal agencies, especially with the Commerce and State departments. Livingstone also coordinated with the Kuwaiti Embassy. She provided Ambassador Al-Sabah with information about the situation in his country and discussed with him matters related to U.S. business concerns.⁹

In his 1 March memo, Secretary Cheney also provided for a Secretary of Defense representative to the reconstruction effort, per-

⁶Memo, Joan F. Kibler to author, 24 Feb 1997.

⁷Livingstone interv, pp. 8, 21–23.

⁸Ibid., p. 27.

⁹Ibid., pp. 8, 13.

haps partly out of concern that he was not adequately represented in Kuwait. Special assistant to the Secretary of Defense David S. Addington drafted a charter for a Secretary of Defense representative to put the recovery operation under one person and take some of the burden off the theater commander. Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf approved the charter. But Addington failed to coordinate with the State Department, which did not receive the charter until after Secretary Cheney signed it. Ambassador Gnehm was understandably upset that he had not been consulted.¹⁰

Secretary of the Army Stone debated whether to fill the newly created position with a political appointee, retired civilian, or active duty officer. He ultimately decided to appoint a general officer, preferably an engineer because the mission involved construction. The political environment required high-level, general officer leadership. At Secretary Stone's request, Hatch submitted the names of both a two-star and a one-star general: Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Kelly, Director of Civil Works, and Brig. Gen. Eugene Witherspoon, commander of the Middle East/Africa Projects Office. The Secretary selected Kelly, in part because of his experience building air bases in Israel and responding to natural disasters. Certainly, a strong case can be made that the scope of the project and the critical interactions with high-level Kuwaiti, State Department, and Defense Department officials dictated the need for a general officer. Whether the mission required a general with two stars can be debated. Addington, who had worked with Kelly a few years earlier on the cleanup of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Alaska, approved the selection.¹¹ Secretary Cheney formally designated General Kelly as his representative on 7 March.¹²

Secretary Stone later outlined General Kelly's duties and responsibilities. During the emergency phase, Kelly would coordinate reconstruction assistance planning, through the Joint Staff, with the CENTCOM commander or his designated representative to ensure a smooth transition from the emergency to the reconstruction phase. He would also identify and request staffing requirements for one year, identify and request all Department of Defense assets required to execute reconstruction activities, and coordinate with the U.S. Ambassador and other federal agencies.

¹⁰Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Kelly, interv by Lt. Col. Douglas Coffey, Kuwait City, n.d., p. 5; Locher interv, p. 31.

¹¹Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Kelly, interv by author, Kuwait City, 7 Apr 1991, pp. 1–3; Kelly, interv by Coffey, pp. 7–10.

¹²Memo, Cheney for the Secretary of the Army, 7 Mar 1991, Kuwait Reconstruction: Command and Control, Office of History Files.

When the reconstruction phase began, Stone continued, Kelly would assume control of the planning and execution of the Defense Department's assistance to the Kuwaiti government. He would also oversee the Corps and civil affairs elements in Kuwait and other elements directed by the Secretary of Defense. He would coordinate with the U.S. Ambassador and the CENTCOM commander. He would submit a biweekly report on Defense Department assistance through Livingstone to the Secretary of the Army, pass taskings on to the Kuwait Reconstruction Task Force in the Pentagon for action, and pass policy questions through the task force to Livingstone for resolution.¹³

Soon after his appointment, Kelly visited the State Department, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and members of the Army Staff. He traveled to Kuwait with the Secretary of the Army the second week of March. They met briefly with Ambassador Gnehm, who made it clear that he was unhappy that he had not been consulted about Kelly's position. However, he favored having one person in charge to coordinate all Defense Department activities. At the end of the meeting, Gnehm asked who his point of contact for security assistance would be. Normally CENTCOM's Director of Logistics handled security assistance. Secretary Stone promised to study the matter.

Secretary Stone returned to the States, but General Kelly stayed on for two weeks to gather more information. When Kelly visited Riyadh, General Schwarzkopf indicated that he opposed giving Kelly responsibility for security assistance. Kelly, he observed, would have enough to do. After the meeting, Schwarzkopf issued a statement that Kelly would be the overall coordinator but would not be in charge of security assistance. Security assistance would ultimately be handled by a reestablished U.S. Liaison Office, Kuwait (USLOK).¹⁴

Recognizing that Kelly would be the senior military officer in Kuwait, Schwarzkopf appointed him the U.S. Defense representative and U.S. Central Command representative for military coordination matters.¹⁵ Kelly considered this action particularly significant because that responsibility was not part of his original charter. Before leaving the Middle East, General Kelly also visited Lt. Gen. William G. Pagonis, the dynamic commander of the ARCENT Support Command. General Yeosock had directed this talented logistician to assist Kelly and his organization. Specifically, Kelly asked Pagonis for support in the areas of

¹³Memo, Secretary Stone for SECDEFREP, 16 Apr 1991, Reading File I, DRAO Files.

¹⁴Kelly, interv by Coffey, pp. 13–14, 17–18.

¹⁵Msg, USCINCCENT to American Embassy, Kuwait, 21 Mar 1991, Kuwait Reconstruction: Miscellaneous Messages, #6, OACE Reference Files.

medical care, military police, explosive ordnance disposal, and air transportation, and found him "extremely supportive."¹⁶

During his trip, Kelly had concluded that he would need at least 50 people, but wanted to minimize overhead expenses. He knew he did not need engineering and contracting in his organization because the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office had that expertise. But he did need budget specialists, auditors, and a lawyer to prevent fraud and abuse. Because Kelly would be operating in a military environment, he wanted his staff to include soldiers as well as civilians.¹⁷

The designation of a Secretary of Defense representative further strained the already tense relationship between the Corps and the Army Staff. Corps leaders had a very different perspective than the Pentagon had. Hatch insisted that the Corps keep Pentagon officials informed of its early interactions with the Kuwaitis, but they failed to pay adequate attention. Pentagon officials, he observed, showed little interest until mid-January when the Corps signed the foreign military sales agreement with the Kuwaitis. At that point, the Department of Defense and the Army Secretariat decided to become more involved. Rather than use existing authorities and procedures, Hatch explained, Pentagon officials concluded that they needed a Department of Defense representative in charge. Yet they had not developed plans for this. To compensate for their own lack of attention, he added, Pentagon officials charged that the Corps had been doing its planning surreptitiously. They insisted that they had to exert more control over the Corps. Although Hatch received repeated requests for information from media representatives, at one point Pentagon officials prohibited him from having any direct contact with the media. Soon after, Corps and Pentagon officials worked out a compromise that permitted Corps officials in Kuwait to talk to reporters there, while Corps officials in Washington remained silent. Later, an elaborate clearance procedure for information released to the media was instituted at Hatch's urging, with approval from Livingstone's office.¹⁸

Locurcio's perspective was the same. Not until the war began winding down, he observed, did officials begin to see the extent of the Department of Defense involvement in postwar Kuwait. They created Kelly's organization, Locurcio remarked, because they feared that, if left to its own devices, the Corps would continue operating in Kuwait indefinitely.¹⁹

¹⁶Kelly, interv by Coffey, p. 19.

¹⁷Kelly, interv by author, 7 Apr 1991, pp. 3–5; Kelly, interview by author, 7 Sep 1991, pp. 2–3.

¹⁸Lt. Gen. Henry J. Hatch, interv by author, Washington, D.C., 15 Feb 1991, pp. 51–53.

¹⁹Locurcio, interv by author, 7 April 1991, pp. 14–15.

General Hatch later contended that Pentagon officials created Kelly's organization to exercise greater control over the Corps because they believed the Corps was operating too independently. He did not believe such a high-level organization was necessary. The Corps, he explained, had taken on more expensive and sensitive emergency operations in the States with authority delegated through the Defense Department.²⁰ The strains between the Corps and the Army Staff and between the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office and the Defense Reconstruction Assistance Office continued throughout the operation.

²⁰Hatch interv, pp. 44, 45.